

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

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FM AMEMBASSY GABORONE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6946

INFO AMEMBASSY BLANTYRE

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY MASERU

AMEMBASSY MBABANE

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 GABORONE 1150

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, XA, RH, BC

SUBJECT: RHODESIA: BOTSWANA'S VERSION OF VICTORIA FALLS TALKS

1. I CALLED ON PERMANENT SECRETARY EXTERNAL AFFAIRS TIBONE AUGUST 28 FOR A BRIEFING ON VICTORIA FALLS TALKS AUGSUTS 25-26; TIBONE ATTENDED THE CONFERENCE AS BOTSWANA'S REPRESENTATIVE AND CLAIMED HE SAT IMMEDIATELY BEHIND IAN SMITH THROUGHOUT THE CONFERENCE.

2. OBSERVERS. TIBONE SAID ANC HAD INVITED PRESIDENTS KHAMA, KAUNDA, SAMORA MACHEL AND NYERERE TO ATTEND VICTORIA FALLS TALKS AS OBSERVERS. PRESIDENT KHAAMA THOUGHT FOUR PRESIDENTS AT VICTORIA FALLS TALKS WAS UNNECESSARY. HE SUGGESTED THAT PRESIDENT KAUNDA REPRESENT THE FOUR PRESIDENTS; AGREEMENT WAS REACHED ON THIS POINT LAT SATURDAY AFTERNOON. IT WAS ALSO AGREED THAT BOTSWANA, TANZANIA AND MOZAMBIQUE WOULD SEND EMISSARIES AS OBSERVERS. TIBONE SAID TANZANIA WAS REPRESENTED BY ITS ACTING HIGH COMMISSIONER IN LUSAKA AND MOZAMBIQUE BY THE
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MINISER OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFARIS. ACCORDING TO TIBONE,

RHODESIAN PRIME MINISTER IAN SMITH HAD INVITED VORSTER AS AN OBSERVER. HE SAID VORSTER ARRIVED ON RHODESAIN SIDE OF THE BORDER AND THEN PROCEEDED ACROSS VICTORIA FALLS BRIDGE FOR MEETINGS WITH PRESENT KAUNDA.

3. OPENING SESSIONS. TIBONE SAID IT HAD BEEN AGREED THAT VORSTER AND KAUNDA WOULD ATTEND THE FORMAL OPENING SESSION AND THEN WITHDRAW; THIS WAS DONE. AT OPENING SESSION BOTH SIDES MADE GOOD, CONSTRUCTIVE STATEMENTS. ACCORDING TO TIBONE, BISHOP MUZAOREWA CALLED ON SMITH TO SPEAK FIRST, ADDRESSING HIM AS PREMIER. IN HIS STATEMENT, SMITH SAID THE TWO SIDES SHOULD FORGET THE PAST, THERE SHOULD BE NO RECRIMINATIONS AND THAT CONFERENCE WAS CONCERNED ONLY WITH FINDING A PEACEFUL SOLUTION TO RHODESIAN PROBLEM. TIBONE SAID BISHOP MUZAOREWA RESPONDED TO SMITH IN SIMILAR TONE; HE COMMENTED ON DISPARITIES IN INCOME IN RHODESIA, LAND HOLDINGS, EDUCATION AND OTHER SUCH PROBLEMS. THE BISHOP SAID THAT ANC WANTED TO FIND A JUST SOLUTION TO THESE PROBLEMS; THERE SHOULD BE NO VENGEANCE, NO RECRIMINATIONS, AND EVERYONE SHOULD WORK FOR THE EQUALITY AND PROTECTION OF RHODESIAN CITIZENS. TIBONE SAID BISHOP MUZAOREWA THEN INVITED PRESIDENT KAUNDA TO SPEAK. KAUNDA IN TURN ASKED VORSTER TO SPEAK. VORSTER SAID HIS MAIN PURPOSE IN COMING WAS TO WISH THE TWO SIDES WELL. HE WAS NOT PRESENT TO INTERFERE IN THE DISCUSSIONS. HE WANTED THE ANC AND THE SMITH GOVERNMENT TO DISCUSS THE AFFAIRS OF THEIR COUNTRY. VORSTER ADVISED BOTH SIDES TO STICK TO THE PRETORIA AGREEMENT IN ORDER TO AVOID DIFFICULTY. VORSTER SAID IN ANC AND SMITH GOVERNMENT STUCK TO THE PRETORIA AGREEMENT, A SOLUTION COULD BE FOUND. PRESIDENT KAUNDA SPOKE ALONG SAME LINES. HE NOTED THAT FACILITIES HAD BEEN PROVIDED TO BRING THE TWO SIDES TOGETHER. KAUNDA ALSO INDICATED THAT HE DID NOT WISH TO INTERFERE; HE STRESSED IMPORTANCE OF PEACE AND NEED FOR A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT.

4. PRETORIA AGREEMENT AND MAJORITY RULE. TIBONE SAID THAT SMITH HAD BROUGHT A SIMPLIFIED VERSION OF THE PRETORIA AGREEMENT TO THE CONFERENCE; HE SAID THIS WAS ON THE WHOLE ACCEPTABLE TO THE ANC. TIBONE NOTED; HOWEVER, THAT THE ANC HAD DIFFICULTIES WITH THE COMMITTEE SESSIONS IN RHODESIA. ANC ARGUED THAT THE VICTORIA FALLS PLENARY SESSION SHOULD GIVE THE COMMITTEES DIRECTION AND DEVELOP TERMS OF REFERENCE. TIBONE SAID ANC WANTED MAJORITY CONFIDENTIAL

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RULE INCLUDED IN A DECLARATION OF INTENT. ACCORDING TO TIBONE, SMITH OBJECTED AND SAID THAT THE INCLUSION OF INTENTIONS WOULD SIMPLY THROW THE CONFERENCE INTO DISARRAY. ANC, ACCORDING TO TIBONE, SAID IT WAS A QUESTION OF PRINCIPLE. (TIBONE HAD THE IMPRESSION AT THIS POINT THAT THE ANC WAS BASICALLY OBJECTING TO COMMITTEE MEETINGS IN RHODESIA.) HE SAID THE CONFERENCE ADJOURNED ON THE DISAGREEMENT REGARDING A DECLARATION OF INTENT.

5. CONFERENCE RECONVENED IN THE AFTERNOON OF AUGUST 25. ANC SAID THE PRETORIA AGREEMENT HAD BROUGHT THEM THERE AND THAT THE TWO SIDES MUST WORK OUT AN ARRANGEMENT FOR THE PLENARY AND COMMITTEE SESSIONS. SMITH TOOK THE POSITION THAT THE ANC WAS DEMANDING A DEPARTURE FROM THE PRETORIA AGREEMENT. TIBONE SAID SMITH AT THIS POINT BECAME RUGGED, TOUGH, PROVOCATIVE AND STUBBORN. TIBONE COMMENTED THAT THE ANC DELEGATION HAD NOT BEEN PREPARED FOR THIS SORT OF BEHAVIOR. THEY BECAME EMOTIONAL AND PANDEMONIUM SAT IN. ANC INSISTED THERE HAD TO BE A DECLARATION OF INTENT REGARDING MAJORITY RULE. SMITH SAID IF CONFERENCE GOT INVOLVED IN DECLARATION OF INTENT, IT WOULD BE NECESSARY TO STATE HIS POSITION ABOUT THE MAINTENANCE OF CIVILIZED STANDARDS. SMITH THEN ASKED FOR ADJOURNMENT INDEFINITELY. TIBONE SAID THE CONFERENCE HAD CLEARLY BROKEN DOWN AT THIS POINT. HE SAID ONE OF THE RHODESIAN DELEGATES ASKED SMITH TO ADJOURN TO TEA. SMITH SAID "NO"; LET'S ADJOURN UNTIL THESE PEOPLE CAN THINK CLEARLY".

6. VORSTER-KAUNDA INTERVENTION. TIBONE SAID THAT VORSTER AND KAUNDA WERE SUBSEQUENTLY INFORMED ABOUT THE BREAKDOWN IN THE TALKS. HE SAID THAT BOTH WERE "MAD". VORSTER STRESSED THAT THE CONFERENCE SHOULD NOT BE BROKEN UP ON THE BASIS OF MERE PROCEDURAL POINTS. THAT WAS NOT IMPORTANT. TIBONE SAID THERE WAS SEVERAL HOURS OF DISCUSSION ABOUT THE DECLARATION OF INTENT ON MAJORITY RULE. HE SAID THE ANC WANTED A DECLARATION WHICH WOULD IN EFFECT STATE THAT "THE ONLY GENUINE BASIS FOR A SOLUTION WAS THE TRANSFER OF POWER TO THE MAJORITY". AFTER HOURS OF DISCUSSION, HE SAID THE ANC FINALLY AGREED TO LANGUAGE WHICH IN EFFECT SAID THE ONLY GENUINE BASIS FOR SOLUTION WAS ONE ACCEPTABLE TO ALL THE PEOPLE OF RHODESIA. TIBONE SAID SMITH OBJECTED TO THE PHRASE "ALL THE PEOPLE". IN THE END SMITH RELUCTANTLY ACCEPTED THE LANGUAGE.

7. TIBONE SAID THE PROBLEM OF THE COMMITTEES WAS AGAIN RAISED BY THE ANC. ANC WANTED THE PLENARY TO WORKOUT A MANDATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

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TERMS OF REFERENCE, ETC. FOR THE COMMITTEES. TIBONE SAID BY THAT TIME IT WAS MIDNIGHT AND VORSTER HAD TO DEPART TO DELIVER A SPEECH IN THE TRANSVAAL ON AUGUST 26. THE ANC FINALLY PROPOSED THAT THE PLENARY MEET IN RHODESIA WITHIN SEVEN DAYS; ANC ALSO AGREED TO HOLD COMMITTEE SESSIONS IN RHODESIA. SMITH EXPRESSED THE VIEW THAT A TARGET DATE OF OCTOBER 31 SHOULD

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AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

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BE SET FOR A SOLUTION TO THE RHODESIAN PROBLEM. THE ANCE THEN SAID IF THE PLENARY AND COMMITTEES MET IN RHODESIA, IT WOULD WANT IMMUNITY FOR THE WING OF ANC DELEGATION WHICH WAS IN LUSAKA UNDER RHODESIAN DEATH SENTENCES. TIBONE MADE IT CLEAR THAT ANC WAS REQUESTING IMMUNITY FOR ONLY TWO MONTHS FOR SITHOLE, CHIKEREMA AND A FEW OTHERS. SMITH FLATLY REFUSED TO GRANT IMMUNITY AND FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT IN RHODESIA FOR EXILES. HE SAID THIS WAS UNREASONABLE AND THAT IT WOULD ONLY LEAD TO VIOLENCE AND CREATE PROBLEMS IN MAINTAINING LAW AND ORDER. ANC CONTENTED THAT IF IMMUNITY WAS NOT GRANTED, IT WOULD IN EFFECT MEAN THAT SMITH WAS CHOOSING THE ANC DELEGATION TO PARTICIPATE IN THE NEGOTIATIONS; THAT WAS UNFAIR. TIBONE INDICATED SMITH WAS ADAMANT. AT THIS POINT IT WAS 1 O'CLOCK AM AGUST 26 AND EVERY-ONE ACCEPTED THE FACT THAT THE TALKS HAD COLLAPSED.

8. SOUTH AFRICAN GOOD OFFICES. TIBONE SAID THE FOLLOWING DAY, AUGUST 26, A ZAMBIAN EMISSARY WAS APPOINTED TO GET IN TOUCH WITH SOUTH AFRICAN FOREIGN MINISTER MULLER WHO WAS STILL IN VICTORIA FALLS TO INFORM HIM ABOUT SITUATION. IT WAS NOTED THAT ANC HAD
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MADE ALL OF THE CONCESSIONS ON MAJORITY RULE, HOLDING PLENARY AND COMMITTEE SESSIONS IN RHODESIA. ANC FELT IT HAD GIVEN SMITH MORE THAN HE HAD ASKED FOR. SMITH HAD GIVEN NOTHING. IT WAS

ALSO POINTED OUT TO MULLER THAT SMITH'S BEHAVIOR WAS INCONSISTENT WITH HIS TALK IN OPENING SESSION ABOUT NO RECRIMINATIONS. IF A LASTING PEACE WAS TO BE FOUND IN RHODESIA, THE ANC SAID FELT IT S PRINCIPALS SHOULD NOT BE VICTIMIZED AND PREVENTED FROM PARTICIPATING IN THE NEGOTIATIONS. ACCORDING TO TIBONE, SMITH TOLD MULLER THAT THE ANC DEMANDS FOR IMMUNITY AND FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT WERE UNACCEPTABLE. ANC SIDE SUBSEQUENTLY REQUESTED MULLER TO GET PRIME MINISTER VORSTER TO USE HIS GOOD OFFICES TO PERSUADE SMITH TO ACCEPT ANC'S REQUEST FOR IMMUNITY. MULLER UNDERTOOK TO DO THAT. TIBONE SAID THE ANC ON ITS SIDE AGREED TO THINK QUIETLY "FOR TEN DAY" TO SEE WHAT CAN BE WORKED OUT.

9. COMMENT. IN VIEW GOB VIEW, VORSTER CLEARLY HOLDS THE KEY TO A SETTLEMENT IN RHODESIA. TIBONE GAINED IMPRESSION THAT SMITH IS RATHER SUBMISSIVE IN VORSTER'S PRESENCE AND THAT ANC COULD NEVER PERSUADE SMITH TO MAKE CONCESSIONS WITHOUT VORSTER'S ASSISTANCE. THE GOB FEELS THAT VORSTER IS BASICALLY COMMITTED TO MAJORITY RULE IN RHODESIA AND HOPEFUL THAT HE CAN DELIVER SMITH.

10. IT APPEARS THAT THE ANC MADE A BASIC MISTAKE BY NOT RAISING THE POINT ABOUT IMMUNITY AND FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT SOONER IN THE DISCUSSION RATHER THAN WAIT UNTIL VORSTER'S DEPARTURE AFTER MIDNIGHT ON AUGUST 25. ANC SEEMS TO WANT IMMUNITY FOR ENFORCEMENT OF EXISTING SENTENCES, ARREST, PROSECUTION, FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT AND FULL RIGHT OF ENTRY AND EXIT OF EXILES. GOB FEELS THAT BOTH SIDES SHOULD COMPROMISE ON SOME OF THESE POINTS TO ALLOW THE PLENARY AND COMMITTEE SESSIONS TO PROCEED IN RHODESIA.

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